

Washington, D.C. – The State Department announced the approval of eight new U.S. direct-hire full-time permanent positions for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in China – four in Beijing, two in Shanghai and two in Guangzhou.

During his appearance before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations on February 28th, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk asked Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy to approve physical space requirements for the FDA to deploy staff and inspectors to U.S. Embassy, Beijing and U.S. consulates in China.

“I am happy to report that the approval process has been completed,” Kennedy wrote to Kirk. “These positions will respond to the urgent challenge of food, drug, and medical device safety issues between the U.S. and China.”

Kirk, co-chair of the U.S.-China Working Group, led a product safety mission to China last August with U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) to press the Chinese government to allow FDA personnel greater access for inspections. During the mission, Kirk and Larsen secured the support of the U.S. Ambassador to China to accommodate additional FDA personnel.

“This is a major victory for American families and a positive development in U.S.-China relations,” Kirk said. “Additional FDA personnel in China will boost the safety and quality of imported food, drugs and medical devices. We must now continue this upgrade to our product safety infrastructure by sending full-time Consumer Product Safety Commission personnel to China.”

On Tuesday, Kirk pressed CPSC Acting Chairwoman Nancy Nord to order full-time product safety officers to China. Nord said she “would welcome having some sort of CPSC presence in Beijing.”